

Senate Bill 115
January 11, 2011
Presented by Dave Risley
Senate Fish and Game Committee

Chairman Brenden and committee members, I am Dave Risley, Fish and Wildlife Division Administrator of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here to provide informational testimony on Senate Bill 115. The issue of hunter protection from harassment is taken very seriously by the Department.

Presently FWP does not provide requestors with the street address, phone number, date of birth, social security number or driver's license number of any hunter. FWP has a policy prohibiting the release of this information, because we believe individuals have a legitimate privacy interest in this and other very specific personal information. FWP does release the names of individuals and their home towns, if this information is requested. Further, FWP does not have access to social security numbers of hunting, fishing, and trapping license holders.

FWP did provide the names and home towns of hunters who harvested a wolf during our one hunting season, based on a request for this information from a non-government organization. I understand that their names then appeared on a website of an organization under the heading "Hall of Shame" and that a couple of the hunters received harassing phone calls.

Finally, FWP notes that the bill does not contain any legislative finding of a privacy interest of individuals in this information. The sponsor may want to consider a justification in statutory language to strengthen SB115's prohibition against disclosure.